British Waterways

waterfront

AUTUMN/WINTER 2002 ISSUE 5

Around the World in Waterways
BW go global

Towpath Tipples
Looking at waterside pubs

Wonder Full!
The 21st Century wonders of the inland waterways

The Dave Years
BW's chief executive retires

Frontlines

A word from the editor

Nicky Ross near Hertford, on the Lee Navigation

Phew… what a summer it has turned out to be! From a relatively poor start, things soon changed. The heat was turned up, the rain turned off, and before we knew it we were baring our knees to the world, eating ice creams and pouring the occasional Pimms. What a great time to get out on the waterways and watch the world go by.

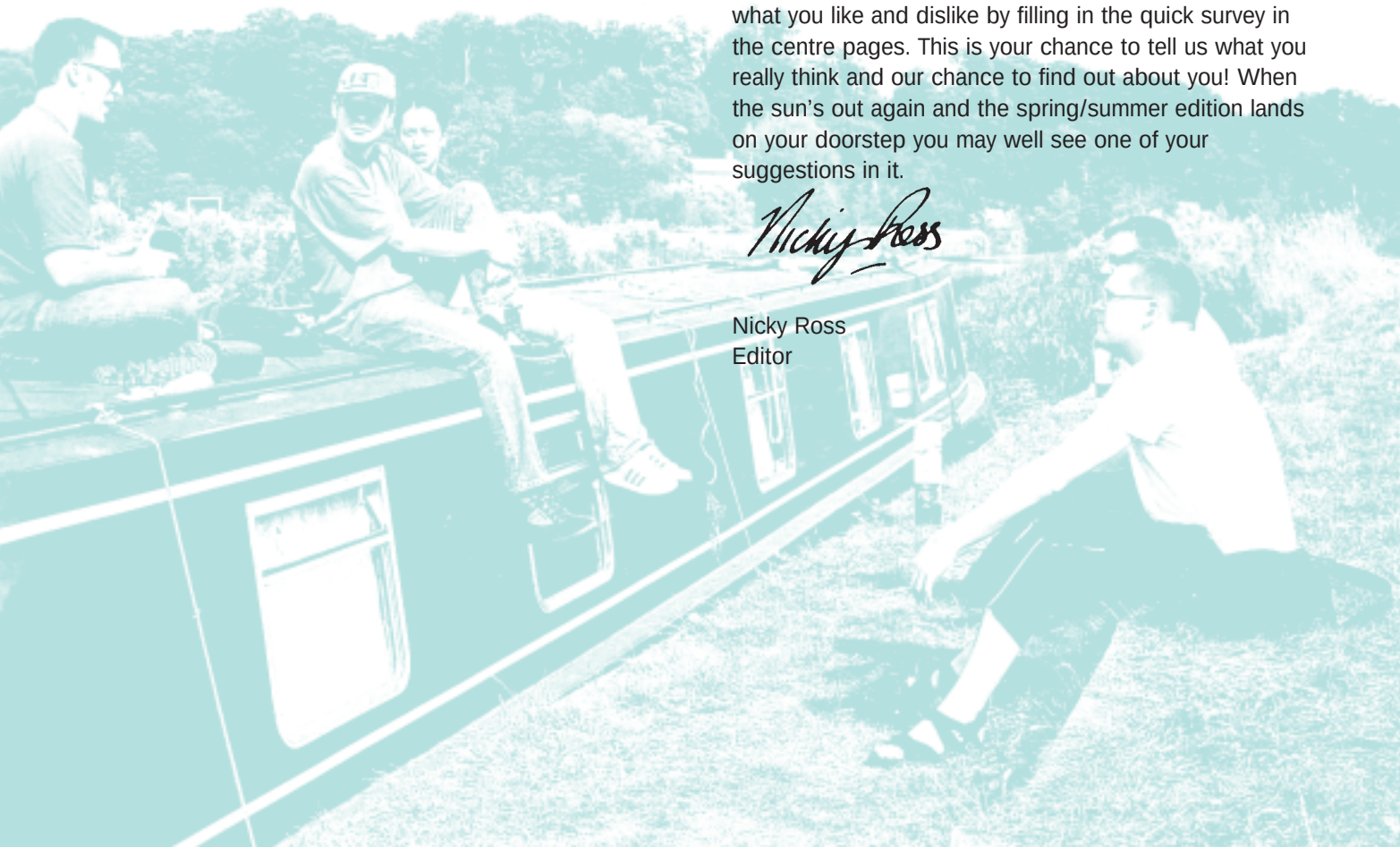
Now turning to autumn and BW is saying goodbye to one of the most inspirational figures to be involved in inland waterways – Dave Fletcher. As BW's chief executive I'm sure you'll agree he's done some great things for our inland waterways. He will be retiring at the end of the year, and you can read all about his time at BW on pages 14 to 17.

Just because the sun's gone in doesn't mean that a visit to a waterside pub is out of the question. As the nights draw in early, there's nothing better than a roast dinner in front of a roaring fire in a countryside pub, followed by a walk along the towpath. BW is supporting the 'Your Countryside, You're Welcome' campaign 'Food', which is encouraging people to go out and eat in the countryside. Page 10 tells you more.

I hope you have been enjoying *Waterfront* - let us know what you like and dislike by filling in the quick survey in the centre pages. This is your chance to tell us what you really think and our chance to find out about you! When the sun's out again and the spring/summer edition lands on your doorstep you may well see one of your suggestions in it.

Nicky Ross

Nicky Ross
Editor



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waterfront

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Front cover picture:
A family enjoying a day out at the Crick Boat Show in June.

Up Front News in Brief

NEW WATERWAYS MINISTER

Alun Michael, Minister of State (Rural Affairs and Urban Quality of Life) was appointed Waterways Minister on 9th September 2002. He will take over this responsibility from the Lord Whitty, who has been the Waterways Minister for the past three years. Secretary of State at DEFRA, Margaret Beckett, made the announcement following changes to the responsibilities of her team of ministers.

As well as looking after inland waterways, Alun Michael is responsible for, amongst other things, Rural Affairs, Hunting with Dogs, the Countryside Agency, National Parks, Access to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Rights of Way and Commons, Horse Issues, the England Rural Development Programme, Environmental Liability, Air Quality and Noise.

BW'S NEW MAN AT THE HELM

BW has announced the appointment of a new chief executive. Robin Evans, currently BW's commercial director, will take over in December when Dave Fletcher, chief executive for the last seven years, retires.

BW undertook an extensive search and selection process, receiving over 250 external and internal applications. The recommendation to appoint Robin Evans has been endorsed by the organisation's government sponsoring body, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish Executive and by the then Waterways Minister, Lord Whitty.

"There cannot be a better time to head an organisation which possesses such immense talent and faces such unprecedented opportunities" said Robin upon his appointment. "The challenge is to increase the numbers of people using and enjoying our waterways by focusing on our customers' wide-ranging needs. By pursuing this goal we will guarantee the future of the waterways as a treasured public asset."

NEW LOOK FOR CRAFT LICENSING

Over the summer, representatives of boating groups have been helping BW work out what improvements should be made to the craft licence fee structures. The system has evolved over the past few decades, and BW wants to make sure that it's right for today's conditions. The aims are to make the fee structure as fair, efficient and simple as possible. The new business management software coming to BW next April will give it the ability to make any desirable changes relatively painlessly.

If you would like a copy of the proposals and discussion documents, they can be downloaded from the BW website www.britishwaterways.co.uk (look under 'activities' - 'boating'), or you can contact the BW Customer Service Centre (01923 201120, Mon to Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 1pm).

STICKING TO THE RULES!

Many licensed boats still don't correctly display their licence disc. The reminder from waterway staff is "please display your boat licence so we can see it!" BW patrol staff are starting to use a new range of stickers to remind people of this. If you're not clearly displaying your licence you may see the gentle reminder 'We know you have a current licence, so please display it – it's a legal requirement' stuck to your boat, whereas repeat offenders could come across more formal warnings. Stickers will also be used to warn boats that have overstayed time at visitor moorings. Anyone wishing to report an unlicensed boat should call BW's licence evasion hotline on 01923 201122.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BW's 'Make a Difference' money, generated from a boom year in commercial ventures, will see vast improvements to the waterways. In addition to planned expenditure, £21million is currently being spent on projects including 200 new lock gates, 185 new visitor mooring locations and 65 new service blocks.

With all the restoration, regeneration and even rebuild projects taking place across the waterway network, we'd be forgiven for thinking that all BW's income is being ploughed into restorations; clearly it's not. The 'Make a Difference' campaign is just enhancing what BW is already doing for the existing network: making a difference and making improvements!

JOHN CRAVEN 'EXPLORES'

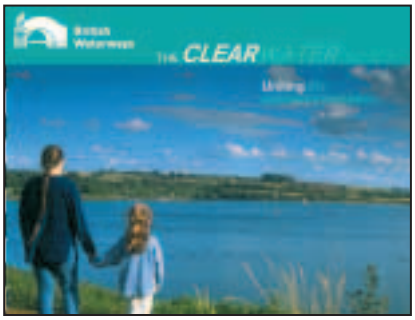
Okay, hands up who remembers John Craven? Once a familiar face giving The News both to us and our children, John is these days making quite a name for himself in the waterways world. As Vice President of The Waterways Trust (TWT), he has just launched 'Explore', a new initiative aimed at encouraging more people to learn about the heritage, skills and history of Britain's canals and rivers.

'Explore' brings together all of the courses and events run by TWT and its three waterway museums, including the introduction of several new courses. By subscribing to 'Explore' people will receive – free of charge – all the latest information, by post or email, about TWT's courses and events, with advance notice of dates and special offers.

Courses currently run by TWT and its museums include Roses & Castles painting, Fender Making, Tug Driving and Blacksmithing. Events include Watersports Jumble, Engine Society Rally, Model Boat Convention, Wonderful Wildlife and Santa Cruises.

Anyone interested in subscribing to 'Explore' should call 01923 201494, email explore@thewaterwaystrust.co.uk or write to 'Explore', The Waterways Trust, The Trust House, Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QA.

THE *CLEARWATER* PROJECT



BW's '*Clearwater* project' has been set up to help it improve efficiency, the way it runs and supports its 'back office' and the way it serves its customers.

The project will enable BW to offer a better service to customers, make itself more flexible for future growth, reduce administration costs, and make BW an even better place to work. Boat owners will benefit from being able to buy boat licences at certain waterway offices, and ultimately buy them (and moorings) over the internet.

The project, led by experienced business managers from around the waterways, kicked off in April 2002 and has made substantial progress since. Assisted by consultants 'Logica' BW's basic business practices have been reviewed, and recommendations for improvements made. These will be supported by new computer software, which will be introduced in April 2003. There may be teething problems at first as staff get to grips with the new way of doing things, but improvements will begin to emerge very quickly. Expect to see more on the *Clearwater* project in the spring/summer edition of *Waterfront*.

SLOW DOWN & GET KNOTTED...PLEASE!

Please slow down when passing moored boats. Yes, the words 'grandma' and 'suck eggs' spring to mind, but this is the message we at *Waterfront* have been asked by numerous boat owners to pass on to other boaters. All craft should slow down when passing moored boats, particularly when there is ice on the surface, and generally never cruise with a breaking wash. Also please make sure that all boats are properly tied up when moored.

IWA APPOINTS NEW VICE PRESIDENT

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) has appointed Dave Fletcher, BW's chief executive, as a vice president. The decision to make the appointment was taken at the July meeting of IWA's Council. The invitation was made in the light of Dave Fletcher's forthcoming retirement as BW's chief executive. Dave and his wife Mary have also been appointed honorary life members of the Association.

"The invitation to Dave Fletcher to become a vice president of the Association is an acknowledgement of his standing in the inland waterway movement. This should be seen not so much as a reward for past services but as an invitation to assist in the future," said Richard Drake, IWA National chairman. Dave Fletcher said of his appointment "The invitation to become an IWA vice president has come as a complete surprise to me, and I regard it as a great honour. My commitment to the inland waterways is undiminished by my forthcoming retirement from BW, so I shall be pleased to help the Association in any way I can in the future."

CANAL BOAT ENTHUSIAST...CBE

Dave Fletcher has also been awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in HM the Queen's Birthday Honours List this year in recognition of his services to inland waterways.

NEW MOORINGS AVAILABLE IN LONDON - DON'T MISS THE BOAT!

BW London has constructed a brand new 120-berth marina at Cowley, near Uxbridge, and is now offering boaters the chance to sign up for non-residential moorings. Packet Boat Marina is situated at the junction of the Grand Union Canal and the Slough Arm. It is ideally placed for cruising into London on an 18-mile lock free cruise to Little Venice and Camden, to the Rivers Lee and Stort via East London, to the non-tidal Thames via Brentford, or northwards on the Grand Union. It is also easily accessible by road and rail.

Set in a newly created public park and open space, facilities at the marina will be of the highest standards with water and electricity for each berth, showers, toilets, a laundrette, 'elsan' disposal and pump-out, a refurbished boat yard, on-site car parking and private access to moorings.

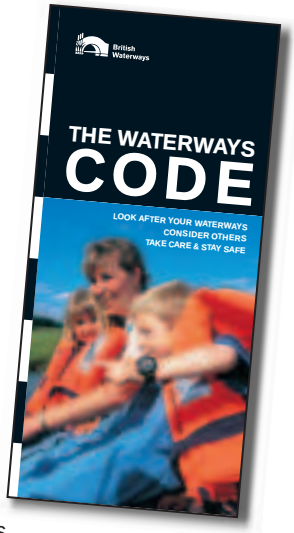
The marina opened to boats this October. The mooring fees are £126 per metre per year. To register an interest in the moorings, or for further information, boaters should contact Robyn Neilsen at British Waterways London on 020 7432 8316.

WATERWAYS CRAFT GUILD

The Waterways Craft Guild was set up in 1997 to encourage, set and maintain high standards of knowledge and practice in the traditional skills of those who lived and worked on and around the waterways in the days of commercial carrying. The Guild says its strength comes from its members, who range from professionals to eager enthusiasts and people who just have an interest in the Guild achieving its objectives. Practising members can get themselves accredited, and use this to help promote themselves. Skills currently being accredited include blacksmithing, boatbuilding, canal boat painting, decorative painting, fenders and associated ropework, metalwork, saddlery and signwriting.

Associate membership costs £10 per annum, whilst Accreditation costs £25 per year. All members are kept up-to-date via a regular colour newsletter, 'The Journeyman'. For details on membership write to: Gill Buxham, Membership Secretary, The Waterway Craft Guild, The Old Rectory, Clocaenog, Ruthin, Clwyd LL15 2AT, tel: 01824 750740 or email: the-old-rectory@bigfoot.com

FRESH NEW LOOK FOR THE CODE



Previously known as the 'orange' leaflet, The Waterways Code leaflet has undergone a transformation. Redesigned to reflect BW's new corporate look, it features revised text to mirror advice in the Boater's Handbook and the WOW waterside safety resource for teachers. The leaflet contains essential information for all towpath and waterway users and explains the three messages of the Code: stay safe, consider others and look after the waterways. Copies are being distributed with licence renewals and new licence applications. Please call the Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120 to receive a copy or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk.

ANDERTON BOAT LIFT REQUIRES TLC AFTER A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER SEASON

The newly restored Anderton Boat Lift has been temporarily closed to boat traffic after a very busy and successful summer season. Over 100,000 people have travelled far and wide to visit the Lift, which has had almost 800 boats through it. More than 16,000 visitors have taken a ride on the trip boat and with the sun shining close to 23,000 ice-creams have been consumed.

Built in 1875, the Lift was restored and reopened in early 2002 after laying dormant for almost 20 years. Bringing such a large and historic structure back to life after decades of inactivity calls for careful attention and BW carries out routine inspections on a daily basis. One of these examinations identified the need for some important additional work, which has brought forward the planned maintenance schedule. The Lift also has planned maintenance work scheduled for 3 - 21 February 2003.

BW apologises for any disappointment and inconvenience this may cause. For up-to-date information please call 01606 786777.

WOW

WOW (Wild Over Waterways), the BW, Inland Waterways Association & The Waterways Trust initiative to involve more children in inland waterways, has just launched a national fundraising campaign. People are being asked to donate just £5 a month. Funds raised will go towards projects to educate and enthuse youngsters so that they see canals and rivers as relevant and engaging rather than as places to avoid, or worse still, to vandalise.

This effort, combined with WOW's resource material for teachers, child-centred events and dedicated website is helping to create a new generation of waterway enthusiasts.

Teaching resources are free to download from the WOW website www.wow4water.net/grownups and are linked to the curricula of England, Scotland and Wales. The website also includes safety resources for teachers and parents to use to promote safe practice around the waterways. *Waterfront* particularly recommends the site because of its great games including 'Boat Afloat', 'Shrewd Operator' and 'Lock Challenge'.

PHONE NUMBERS

A 'CUT OUT AND KEEP' LIST OF USEFUL NUMBERS

BW Customer Service Centre **01923 201120**	For general customer & craft licensing enquiries. Mon to Fri 8am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 1pm. Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays.
BW Emergency Helpline **0800 47 999 47**	24 hour helpline to report waterway infrastructure emergencies, such as damage to structures or water escaping.
BW Licence Evasion Hotline **01923 201122**	Every penny due to BW is needed to maintain the waterways, so if you see a boat not showing a current licence disc, please report it to BW's hotline.
Pollution Helpline **0800 80 70 60**	Report pollution, fly tipping or fish in distress to the Environment Agency.
Animals in Distress Helpline **0990 55 59 99** **for England & Wales** **0131 33 90 111** **for Scotland**	Report birds or animals in distress to the RSPCA (24hrs) or the Scottish SPCA.

AROUND THE WORLD IN WATERWAYS

Malaysia, France, India, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands… it could almost be a list of destinations on the departure board at Heathrow airport, but it's not. In fact, these countries are just a handful of those that BW is currently working with. Want to know more? Well *Waterfront* did, and this is what we found out.

BW has been selling its expertise in the form of consultancy both domestically and internationally for many years. In fact, according to BW's regional director in the north west Derek Cochrane, BW can take on the entire planet! "Our experience of working in the UK and abroad has equipped us with the skills to tackle any waterway anywhere in the world," says Derek. And he should know; he was involved in setting up BW's first overseas joint venture in Malaysia earlier this year.

In March 2002 BW formed Prelude Resources - a joint venture with Malaysian company Anggun Perkasa. The company will provide waterway related consultancy and services in south east Asia. Although involved in overseas consultancy for many years, BW has never before taken on the management of a waterway, and so significant was this, that the agreement was signed in the presence of Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister.

"The Melaka River in Malaysia is much like the River Weaver in Cheshire – only with sunshine and iguanas!" says Derek Cochrane. "We believe that the lessons we have learnt in Britain can be applied to deliver real benefits to the people of Malaysia. This is a country with a fantastic waterway heritage and we are looking forward to the opportunity of working with the Malaysian authorities in the future."

But it isn't just in Malaysia that BW is making waves. In India it was appointed by West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Ltd to carry out a feasibility study for the renovation of Calcutta's disused and badly silted North Canal System. The government in West Bengal is looking to regenerate the north part of the city and sees the 27-mile long North Calcutta Canal as an important part of its plans. Built in the 19th century for drainage and irrigation as well as navigation the canal could undergo a spectacular transformation according to BW's initial investigations. Some of the suggestions include a fast shuttle system transporting up to 47,000 passengers a day (helping alleviate the city's chronic transport problem), a water taxi service

and plans to establish freight services to handle around 180,000 tons of cargo each year. This could ultimately lead to the reopening of the canal and river trade with Bangladesh and to the canal being integrated into the proposed new town of Rajarhat. The scheme would also help create a vibrant waterfront with the canal as a focus for water tourism in Calcutta and the Sunderbans, not too dissimilar to what BW is already doing in many cities throughout Britain.

WATERWAYS IRELAND

A bit closer to home, BW is involved in work in Ireland. Waterways Ireland is one of the six North-South Implementation Bodies established in 1999 under the Good Friday Agreement. No sooner was it set up than BW was asked to advise on the management structure and staffing, something that BW felt it was well equipped to do. The body has its headquarters in Enniskillen, with regional offices in Scariff, Carrick-on-Shannon and Dublin. Just like BW, it is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of navigable inland waterways, and again like BW, will encourage people to use them for leisure. Since its establishment Derek Cochrane has been acting as Waterways Ireland's independent interviewer in recruiting its executive team.

RESTORATION… DESTINATION: NORTH WEST EUROPE

BW is also leading a restoration project across north west Europe with its nearest neighbours. Funded through the EU Interreg programme, the 'sustainable canal restoration' project is aiming to restore and develop historic inland waterways in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands. The project includes regenerating city centres and remote rural areas, linking waterways across borders, conserving historic features, and fully restoring waterways for boating. By working together and encouraging tourism, education and common practices, it's hoped that this project will significantly enhance the quality of inland waterways in north west Europe. It is anticipated such projects will continue to flow under BW's leadership of Voies Navigable d'Europe, the consortium established to provide the necessary networks to obtain funding.

EUREAUWEB™

As well as working as a consultant for waterways all over the world, BW is involved in an exciting new project to develop a state-of-the-art information service to inland waterway users across Europe. EurEauWeb™ is a consortium led by University College Cork, Ireland and includes technical software and hardware organisations from Spain, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and of course BW. The project is being part-funded by the EU and experienced boaters and waterways organisations are heavily involved. The product being developed, EurEauWeb™, uses integrated mobile communications, satellite positioning, digital mapping and internet databases to provide precise location-based information to users wherever they may be in Europe.

If you want to plan a trip from home it will run off a PC or a laptop, or if you want to use it on your boat or beside the water it will run off a portable hand-held device. Information will be tailor made for the end-user according to what they want. The project, aimed at boat owners, boat hirers, hire boat companies, anglers, ramblers and cyclists, will provide information on services, tourist attractions, history and the environment, as well as maps and route planning at the touch of a button. The team has taken a 'design for all' approach so that the needs of people with a range of physical impairments are catered for in the EurEauWeb™ products. Being such a large and complex project, this all takes time to develop. Market ready demonstrators will be available in 2005, but we can expect to see prototypes being tested on Europe's waterways as soon as mid-2003.

THE WORLD COMES TO SCOTLAND

After a very successful week in Montréal this autumn, the World Canals Conference, the international event that brings organisations from around the world together to discuss waterways, is being hosted in Scotland in September 2003. This will give BW the ideal opportunity to showcase its achievements (which will no doubt include The Falkirk Wheel), network with similar organisations from around the world and share ideas.

With BW involved in activity all over the world, maybe one day you'll be able to get *Waterfront* from newsagents in Malaysia, India, France… maybe, just maybe.

l-r The North Calcutta Canal, India; The Melaka River, Malaysia; Signing the joint venture in Malaysia; City of Bruges, Belgium

THE WATERWAYS TRUST

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

The Waterways Trust

The Waterways Trust (TWT) is a relatively young charity. Set up in 1999, its aims are to raise funds for Britain's canals and rivers and to promote the waterways to the public. And to be fair, to date TWT has done a pretty good job.

As well as having the endorsement of government, TWT also has a host of well known people supporting it in various roles. HRH The Prince of Wales is its Patron, broadcasters John Craven OBE and Paul Atterbury are vice presidents, as is Poirot actor David Suchet OBE and waterway icon Sonia Rolt. *Waterfront* spoke to TWT chief executive Roger Hanbury, to discover a bit more about some of the work it has been involved in.

It's a late September morning and Roger is on his way to Lancaster. Blue skys, bright sunlight and a chill in the air await him as he makes his way to the official opening of the Millennium Ribble Link.

RESTORATIONS

"TWT has managed to raise around £500,000 towards the construction of the Millennium Ribble Link here in Preston" explains Roger. "We are very excited to have Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to officially open this waterway. Thanks to help of many partners we now have a navigation route to the previously landlocked Lancaster Canal."

In little more than three years, TWT has helped to facilitate £45 million of investment in the UK's inland waterways. So how do they do it? "It's about people and partnership" says Roger. "Our canals and rivers offer great opportunities and by working in partnership we are able breathe new life into Britain's waterways and deliver real benefits to the communities they connect."

In fact TWT is working closely with lots of different organisations on a range of restoration projects. In the north west it has provided finance and security for the restoration of the once derelict Rochdale Canal. It took on ownership of the canal to enable the project to proceed, and the canal was opened for commissioning by John Craven OBE in June 2002.

Last year TWT worked alongside Friends of Anderton Boat Lift, the Anderton Boat Lift Trust, IWA and BW to restore Anderton Boat Lift.

"In spring 2002 Anderton Boat Lift was reopened after 18 years of laying dormant" says Roger. "TWT helped the partners launch a public appeal. This tremendous support from the public helped raise £500,000 of the £7 million that was required to complete the project. Thanks to everyone involved Anderton Boat Lift is now up and running again."

As well as raising funds and working in partnership to open waterways TWT is also working across the country to protect existing waterways. In partnership with the Environment Agency, TWT has recently launched a major new fundraising campaign to help safeguard one of the world's most famous waterways, the River Thames. Backed by the artist and television presenter Rolf Harris, an appeal has been launched.

"The Thames is a unique waterway. Its wooded islands are an important landscape feature and home to some of the UK's most threatened species, including the endangered water vole and

“In little more than three years, TWT has helped to facilitate £45 million of investment in the UK’s inland waterways. ”

nationally scarce Loddon Lily” says Roger. “Through the ‘Living Thames Appeal’ we hope to raise much-needed funds to prevent the islands of the River Thames from disappearing and to offer long-term security to the rich and varied flora and fauna that rely on them.”

MUSEUMS

TWT also owns and manages three museums – The Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port; The Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire; and The National Waterways Museum in Gloucester. On top of this it also looks after The Waterways Archive.

“All our museums and the archive provide centres of learning where the general public and enthusiasts alike can experience the magic of the waterways” explains Roger. “It’s important for us to further develop our museums and encourage as many people as possible to come and visit them and learn all about inland waterways.”

WILDLIFE

Another area in which TWT is involved is looking after the wildlife and natural environment on and around waterways.

“We are committed to looking after waterway wildlife and plants” enthuses Roger. “TWT has a very successful wildlife appeal in place, which is funding work to protect endangered waterway flora and fauna, including otters. Once widespread in the UK, the otter population has declined over the past 50 years because of pollution and pesticides. Today, you’ll only see them in isolated parts of the country.” According to Roger, as little as £17 could pay to install man-made ‘holts’ to provide homes for otters, and help renew habitats on rivers like the Kennet and the Severn.

“Educating people about waterways is another area we concentrate on” says Roger. “We have got together with IWA and BW to promote an appeal to raise funds to educate and enthuse children about waterways.” Under the WOW (Wild Over Waterways) banner, people are being encouraged to help promote waterways to children. “It is hoped that this will ensure that future generations will grow up to understand and care about waterways, so they may long continue to be important to the nation” he says.

And with that, Roger hurries away to meet Margaret Beckett, MP, and help with the official opening of the Millennium Ribble Link.

TRUST FOR THE FUTURE

For a relatively new organisation TWT has certainly made quite some impact on the waterways world. Its future plans are “ambitious” according to Roger, ranging from education and fundraising to conservation and awareness. Working with a large range of partners, TWT hopes to contribute to the future restoration of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway; the Bow Back Rivers; the Cotswold Canals; the Droitwich Canals; Foxton Inclined Plane; the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Extension to Liverpool; the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal; the Montgomery Canal; and the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal.

TWT has played a major role in partnering lots of existing organisations to bring about what has been heralded the ‘New Canal Age’, and long may it continue to do so.

If you are interested in any of the campaigns and appeals above or require further information visit www.thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

To make a donation please call the donation hotline on 0845 0700 710

l-r The Lancaster Canal; Roger Hanbury with Rt Hon Margaret Beckett, MP at the opening of the Millennium Ribble Link

The Waterways Trust Museums in conjunction with *Waterfront* magazine

2 for 1 museum offer

The Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. Tel: 0151 355 5017
(Adult £5.50 Child £3.70, OAP student or unemployed £4.30) www.boatmuseum.org.uk

The Canal Museum, Stoke Bruerne, Northamptonshire. Tel: 01604 862229
(£3 adults, £2.50 children/OAPs)

The National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Docks. Tel: 01452 318054
(Adults £4.95, Children/OAP’s £3.95) www.nwm.org.uk

Offer valid on production of this voucher until 31st March 2003

www.thewaterwaystrust.co.uk

One person is entitled to free entry when one adult pays full price. Offer is valid until 31 March 2003. Lower priced admission free. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. For opening times and more details please contact the museums directly on the above numbers.

Towpath TIPPLES

The nights are drawing in and there's a definite chill in the air, but don't despair because there are still plenty of good reasons to wrap up and take to the towpaths – not least the fact that some of the most cosy and enticing pubs nestle beside the waterways.

BW is among more than 50 organisations supporting 'Your Countryside, You're Welcome', a national campaign to promote the benefits of the English countryside – even in the winter!

'Food' is the campaign's winter theme, linking to British Food Fortnight (28 October to 10 November), which aims to get everyone 'buying British' to support farmers and small rural businesses.

Often tucked away in picturesque rural spots, canalside pubs are renowned for their excellent home-cooked food and welcoming atmosphere. What better way could there be to support 'Your Countryside, You're Welcome', than by taking to the towpath to track down your favourite tipple, with a steak and kidney pie to follow?

Traditionally winter is the season when BW carries out planned maintenance and repair work on the canal network and this can interrupt boating journeys. But there are still plenty of ways to enjoy the waterways.

The level towpaths are a great place for a bracing autumn stroll, and even at this time of year there's plenty to interest wildlife lovers. Better still, a waterside walk is a great way to keep fit and healthy instead of hibernating indoors in front of the television.

BW's website www.britishwaterways.co.uk includes information on many pubs beside canals and even maps showing how to reach them. Local waterway offices often have information on walks, and guides to individual canals in all parts of the country are available from BW's Customer Service Centre, telephone 01923 201120, write to BW Customer Service Centre, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QA, or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk.

To whet your appetite, take a look at our photographs of picturesque waterside pubs and restaurants on this page. And if you have a particular favourite or recommendation that you would like to share, please let us know. You can write to the editor at *Waterfront*, British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road Watford WD17 4QA or email waterfront@britishwaterways.co.uk

British Food Fortnight
26 Oct ~ 10 Nov 2002

YOUR COUNTRYSIDE
you're welcome

l – r: The 'Waters Edge' at the mouth of the Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal; The 'Globe' in Leighton Buzzard on the Grand Union Canal, back in 1995 it was awarded one of the best waterside pubs by BW; If you fancy something Welsh why not go to 'Cegin Cymru Cyf' Coffee/Tea Shop in Goytre Wharf on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, which also has a shop selling produce made in Wales; If British food is not your thing try some Chow Mein at the 'Feng Shang' Chinese boat restaurant on the Regent's Canal, Camden; or in Scotland visit our namesake 'Waterfront' in Edinburgh

Picture courtesy of Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board

CANALS AT THE CUTTING EDGE

When canals were first built at the height of the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago they represented the cutting edge of technology and innovation. Today that same pioneering spirit is very much in evidence and waterways are still the inspiration for a fount of invention.

There's nothing more relaxing than a boat chugging gently through the countryside on a warm sunny day, but that sedate image belies the fact that waterways are still a powerhouse of activity and revolution. Far from sleepy backwaters, waterways are actually working for the 21st Century.

THE HISTORY BIT

Canals were Britain's first transport system, underpinning the success of the Industrial Revolution. The first waterway of the 'Canal Age' was the Sankey Brook (St Helens Canal) of 1757, closely followed in 1761 by the famous Bridgewater Canal, built by the entrepreneurial Duke of Bridgewater to carry coal from his mines at Worsely to the markets of Manchester.

The roads of the day were poor and one horse hauling a laden canal boat could carry far more than pack animals – and do so more quickly and safely. So successful was the Duke's canal that many followed his example.

By 1793, the country was in the grip of 'Canal Mania' as rich and poor alike raced to invest in the new canals that would make them rich.

Speculation in canal building schemes reached its zenith with, in just two years, 37 Acts for the construction of new canals passed by Parliament. Meetings to enlist subscribers to new canal projects were held all over the country, in pubs and halls, attended by hopeful investors who had travelled great distances to make a quick investment killing.

Interest was so frenzied that promoters even resorted to holding 'decoy' meetings to throw massive crowds off the scent when they feared a riot could break out.

Pioneering engineers were the heroes of the age, building structures never attempted before: waterways were carried across valleys on soaring aqueducts, climbed slopes by means of inclined planes or steeply stacked flights of locks, and sliced through hills in tunnels.

200 years ago it seemed that no obstacle was immovable and new ideas and techniques were invented and used to make the canal explosion possible.

REINVENTION

Today a second technological revolution is taking place – wresting the waterways from the brink of extinction and shaping an exciting new future where the historic network can again make an important contribution to the environmental, economic and social well-being of the country.

In Scotland the astonishing Falkirk Wheel boat lift epitomises the optimism and invention alive on the waterways today – a design that harks back to the problem-solving vision of early canal engineers, while literally re-inventing the wheel for new generations.

Connecting the newly restored and re-opened Forth & Clyde and Union canals, The Falkirk Wheel is the world's first rotating boat lift. Towering 115ft high (equivalent to eight stacked double decker buses) and capable of carrying the combined weight of 100 fully grown African Elephants, one rotation of the wheel uses the same amount of power as just two electric showers.

Importantly, the wheel is becoming a major visitor attraction, providing a massive boost to the local economy while offering

an elegant and practical solution to the challenge of re-connecting two historic waterways.

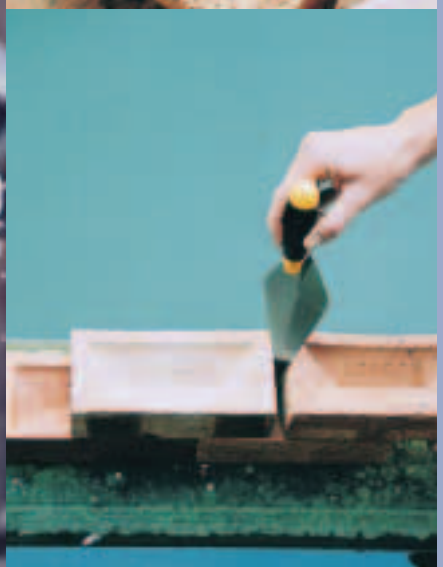
BW is committed to finding and creating ways for the 2,000-mile waterway network to make a significant contribution to the life of the country and this often means thinking beyond the confines of bricks and water.

FIBREOPTICS

Optical fibres laid along the towpath already provide enough capacity for every person in Britain to make a simultaneous phone call. It's interesting to think that in 2002 the main 'cargo' carried on the waterway network is electronic data, surely the most valuable commodity of the new millennium.

And all the money BW earns from this venture is reinvested back into the waterways, ensuring that the historic structures and environment of this unique national resource are maintained and safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

"And this is just the beginning. Who knows what new ways future generations might find to tap the enormous potential of this man-made network of natural treasures? "



WATER

It might sound obvious, but water is the network's key asset - BW's canals, rivers and reservoirs hold an estimated 200,000 megalitres of water. Water has always been transferred between waterways and BW sells it to canalside industry and even supplies half of Bristol's drinking water via canal.

BW now plans to develop the network further, using it to carry water from areas of surplus to areas of demand and sell it to a whole range of customers. To capitalise on this precious resource BW will shortly launch a major new joint venture, to make 'the Watergrid' a reality.

Backed by government, this imaginative venture will not only bring new income for reinvestment to BW, but will also generate competition in the water industry and provide greater choice and service to water customers.

PROPERTY

BW manages a large property estate including operational boatyards, docks, historic warehouses, lock cottages, marinas, industrial estates and brownfield development land. Joint ventures with private partners have, over the last 10 years, produced some striking success stories – most notably the regenerated waterfronts of Birmingham, Gloucester, Sheffield and Leeds.

The transformation of once neglected, run-down backwaters into vibrant, mixed-use developments has been the most visible sign of 'the new canal age' and proved how waterways can 'light the blue touchpaper' to wider regeneration.

With the support of government, BW has set up an imaginative new property public-private partnership called 'ISIS Waterside Regeneration' – a joint venture with AMEC and Igloo Regeneration Fund. 'ISIS' will help BW to develop waterway sites for environmental and social benefits, generating good long-term revenue to be reinvested back into the waterways.

SPACE-AGE BOATS

Boat design is also at the technological cutting edge. You can already see environmentally friendly electric boats gliding quietly along the waterways - and, for a real space-age twist, canal boats powered by hydrogen fuelled power cells have been constructed.

JUST THE BEGINNING

Today waterways provide so much more than a good day out. In 200 years the wheel has turned full circle and canals are once again at the forefront of new thinking and new design.

And this is just the beginning. Who knows what new ways future generations might find to tap the enormous potential of this man-made network of natural treasures?

the DAVE years

As Dave Fletcher nears his retirement after seven years as BW's chief executive *Waterfront* looks back at 'the Dave years'.

No sooner had Dave Fletcher joined BW than he found he had the world at his feet. The first ever World Canals Conference was held in Birmingham in June 1996, just four months after Dave's arrival.

Dave must have thought he had struck gold when, just a couple of months later, London's Waterway Partnership received a hefty £28 million to regenerate London's canals and the Kennet & Avon Canal was awarded a record £25 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for its restoration. It certainly was all go.

Then, in December 1996, he initiated a big step forward for inland waterways. He set up the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA), now the well recognised voice for the managers of Britain's inland waterways, and to this day remains its chairman.

SECURING THE NETWORK

He was certainly making his mark, but things weren't all rosy. By 1997 the state of repair of BW's waterways, illustrated by the collapse of the roof of Harecastle Tunnel, was top of his agenda. He rightly felt that it was not acceptable to have a backlog of maintenance works that ran in to hundreds of millions of pounds, so he started on what was to become one of his major drives in BW – eliminating the backlog of maintenance works.

In the 1996/1997 Annual Report he wrote "As I took on this job, the Board was warning in its Annual Report and Accounts for 1995/96 that it was seriously concerned that British Waterways' total income will now be inadequate and that the safety and integrity of the network will therefore be put at risk." He then went on to say "British Waterways' fundamental challenge has been to secure adequate funding, not just to patch the failing 200 year old structures until next year, but to make a unique part of the nation's heritage and environment secure for another 200 years." And he meant it.

GAINING THE GRANT & BRINGING IN THE BUSINESS

In that year Dave managed to secure an additional £5 million above the original government grant, an increase that allowed BW to begin to seriously tackle the backlog of maintenance work.

Getting money from government was not the only way BW was securing extra cash. Behind the scenes its commercial team had been working hard to secure a deal that would put BW firmly on the business community's agenda. In March 1997 BW announced the go-ahead for the next phase of a its telecommunications business venture. The towpaths of Britain's canals - home to hundreds of miles of hidden fibre-optic cables - were playing their part in the UK's technological development. Multi-million pound orders for Fibreway (now Easynet) had come in from two leading telecoms network operators.

TOUGH DECISIONS

He also had to make what was quite a hard decision concerning boat licence pricing. As a boater for over 20 years, Dave could easily empathise with the ideas and concerns that boat owners had. He shared their views on needing improved facilities, enhanced navigation channels, increased dredging, and an overall better upkeep of waterways; all of which, needless to say, costs money. He also knew that if government and other funders were to contribute even more funds they would want to be reassured that BW was charging market rates to boaters. BW had to make sure a fair price was paid for licences, and back then this meant an increased price. It was a tough decision for him to take, but he felt it was a fair one, and one that would ultimately benefit boaters. Dave also had to take a similar decision later on, with moorings. Again, it was one that would cause concern, but one he felt was fair, and that was what mattered to him.

CLIMATE CHANGES

As soon as the income came in, it went out again, spent mainly on the upkeep of the network. Even though millions was being ploughed into the network, it was still experiencing problems. There was one thing to blame – rain – and in 1997 it was the lack of it.

In the Annual Report 1997/98 Dave reported that "We have recently experienced the driest weather since the canals were built. We are having to invest over £1million on backpumping schemes to recycle water and keep canals open. This is an area

l-r Dave on his boat 'City of Gloucester'; With Welsh Assembly Minister Sue Essex and BW staff Heather Duncan and Richard Dommett on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal; At the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct with Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott; With actor and waterway enthusiast David Suchet.

of our service we will have to monitor very closely if the current dry weather trends continue as most experts believe they will." Amidst the hard work being done, the organisation was singled out to take over responsibility for the waterspace in London Docklands from the winding down London Docklands Development Corporation at the end of 1997. The area surrounding the prestigious Canary Wharf was a real 'feather in the cap' and the transfer meant that BW was being recognised as the navigation authority that could best bring the waterspace alive.

THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

In 1998 BW held its inaugural Annual Meeting at the London Canal Museum in Kings Cross. With an attendance of around 100 people, Dave launched that year's Annual Report as well as BW's first ever published strategic plan imaginatively entitled 'Our Plan for the Future 1997-2001'.

In that year Dave said "There is change in the air for the waterways. I am sure it is a change for the better…I feel certain we can together create a 'golden age of canals' which will make Britain's waterways, for the second time, the wonder and envy of the world." And he was right in his thinking because waterways were certainly becoming the talk of the town.

That financial year also saw another first – earned income had, for the first time, exceeded government grant, a trend that would remain so for the years ahead.

JOHN PRESCOTT ON BOARD

The following year, 1999, started off with a bang. Amidst a blaze of publicity John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, announced an annual £8 million uplift in government grant to tackle urgent safety-related maintenance. Prescott also announced that there would be new opportunities for public/private investment and plans to engage the enthusiasm of millions of people through consultation on a membership scheme and new charitable trust for the nation's waterways. A modern, publicly available framework to guide BW was also to be produced.

The Waterways Trust (TWT) was set up following this announcement, and Dave was appointed to its Board of Directors. Dave is a great supporter of making the waterways accessible for everyone and encouraging as many people as possible to use them. He saw TWT as a vehicle to promote this, and at the time it was formed he said "I believe this is a good model of how a trust can be used to conserve our nationally important waterway heritage and make it available to many more people across the country." And true to his statement, TWT has gone on to do exactly this in many ways.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE

June 1999 saw the launch of one of the biggest consultation exercises ever to be seen on inland waterways: 'Partnership with the People'. Around 16,500 responses were received, and one of the recommendations was to work more closely with TWT.

BW continued to be seen as the organisation best placed to take on the management of other parts of the inland waterways when it took on Linton Lock that year. Approximately seven miles from York, Linton Lock provides a navigable link between Ripon, York and the Humber Estuary. It was felt that under BW's management its long-term security was better guaranteed.

RESTORING WATERWAYS

In 1999 BW realised that waterways were now being restored at the same rate as they were originally built 200 years ago. BW, under Dave's guidance, was on target to open an additional 200 miles of waterway. With great delight he accepted a cheque for £3.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Anderton Boat Lift. Along with Friends of Anderton Boat Lift, the Anderton Boat Lift Trust and Inland Waterways

l-r Being interviewed by the press in Paddington Basin, with the Lord Whitty; HRH Prince Charles signing the visitor book at the Standedge Visitor Centre; Running away with the BW logo at its first Annual Meeting.

Association, he used his new ties with The Waterways Trust to mount a public fundraising appeal to raise another £500,000.

Firmly believing in the value of the heritage and wildlife that waterways offer, Dave was on hand to see BW open a brand new heritage training centre at Hatton. He also launched BW's framework for producing waterway Biodiversity Action Plans with the Director General of The Wildlife Trusts, and oversaw a deal signed with Bristol Water that would mean half the city's drinking water coming from the River Severn via the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.

Approaching the end of the Millennium, Dave saw to it that two more schemes were well on their way to joining the ever growing list of restored waterways. The restoration of Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal was launched, whilst up in Scotland Falkirk Council gave planning permission for a huge wheel to be built that would link the Forth & Clyde and Union canals, and go on to make architectural history. He could have sat back and enjoyed the Millennium celebrations. However, Dave being Dave, decided to do what he thought any good chief executive of BW should do: plan his next list of waterways to restore.

Predictably, no sooner had the new year begun than BW unveiled plans to restore the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal as well as plans for a new canal in the centre of Liverpool. With the Teeside Development Corporation now defunct, the Tees Barrage needed a new manager, and BW was there showing both the willingness and capability to take on responsibility for this important waterspace in the north east.

Meanwhile, a bit further south, a scheme to develop Paddington Basin, the biggest development in London since the Docklands, was launched to the press. Dave was there - wellies, hard hat and all - in the bottom of a dewatered basin with the then Waterways Minister the Lord Whitty. Never one to miss an opportunity, he played his part for the cameras, but as ever was also mindful to have a word in the ear of the Lord Whitty, always trying to push waterways to the top of the agenda.

WATERWAYS FOR TOMORROW

And maybe it worked, for in June 2000, *Waterways for Tomorrow*, the first government policy document on inland waterways for over 30 years, was produced. It recognised the waterways as an important national asset and sought ways to deliver their full social, economic and environmental potential, something we know Dave felt strongly about.

Dave said at the Annual Meeting that year "Five years ago I feared for the future of the waterways. Now I believe we are in a position from which we can deliver a secure waterway network that will benefit millions of people for many generations to come. That is a remarkable turnaround." It certainly was. BW achieved a record level of third party funding, just over £66 million. Dave, however, was only half way through his time at BW, and still had another three years to go. This same Annual Meeting also saw the introduction of George Greener, BW's new chairman.

To top off the first year of the new Millennium, BW won the Good Britain Guide's 'Tourism and Heritage Organisation of the Year', was awarded Charter Mark (the government award for good customer service) for the third time, and saw its website twice voted the BBC's 'Website of the Day'. However, it was all too good to last and sure enough the rain struck again, this time with floods sweeping across the country.

FOOT & MOUTH

BW got 2001 underway with more good news as the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, including Standedge Tunnel, opened and partnerships to restore the Cotswold and Manchester, Bolton & Bury canals were cemented.

Then disaster struck the country - Foot & Mouth disease hit, and it hit big time. Dave and his colleagues made the decision to close the waterways in an effort to help hamper the spread of the disease. With waterways shut, some engineering maintenance works had to cease. Would this mean the failure of his target to eliminate the backlog of safety-related maintenance arrears by the end of 2004?

The outbreak of Foot & Mouth disease and the floods did cause setbacks, but did not affect works enough to cause too much worry. In fact, for the first time ever, the cost of eliminating the backlog of safety-related maintenance work had fallen below the £40 million mark.

By April 2001 we heard that the Foot & Mouth epidemic had been more or less controlled. BW's operations director Stewart

the DAVE years

Sim worked long and hard with BW staff, waterway users and agricultural and environmental specialists ADAS to safely open as many waterways as possible. When Dave got a call from Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott he was delighted to offer BW's workshop at Bulbourne as the venue for a press call to declare the 'countryside open again'. Dave, and the entire nation, breathed a huge sigh of relief.

UNLOCKED & UNLIMITED

Up in Scotland the Forth & Clyde Canal opened in May and the Union Canal in August, with tens of thousands of people coming out to celebrate their new canal. Dave said that year "We have made so much progress, but it is important that we do not become complacent. The same energy that went into the long years of work to see the waterways recognised and begin to be revitalised needs to be redirected."

Early in 2002 Dave was in Malaysia setting up BW's first overseas joint venture company. He also accompanied Her Majesty the Queen when she opened The Falkirk Wheel in Scotland in May. It also turned out to be a year of recognition. In January, June Pell, Dave's PA, was awarded an MBE. No sooner had he shaken June's hand, than the congratulations were directed at him, with the announcement that he had been awarded a CBE that summer for his services to waterways.

Spring saw the emergence of what was to become a familiar phrase in the waterways: 'Unlocked and Unlimited'. This snappy title was being used to describe the new tranche of forthcoming waterway restoration projects. A massive event was held in London in March to launch this. Over 450 partners from all over the country listened as he revealed plans for nine new waterway restoration and new build projects. The thunderous applause brought the house down, and he really felt a part of waterway history in the making.

The highlight of Dave's waterways career must have been a couple of weeks later when he reopened Anderton Boat Lift. Dave had visited the Lift many years before on his boat, his ambition having been to use it, but unfortunately it had ground to a halt and closed down, with no viable plans to get it on its feet again. With the help of many people, he used every effort to get it restored – and of course with Dave behind the campaign that's exactly what happened. On the opening day, he was reported to have had an almost childlike excitement at seeing Anderton Boat Lift, the 'Cathedral of the Waterways', working once again.

Dave's final year at BW also saw years of hard work come to fruition as two significant public private partnerships were set up - one for property development and one to transfer and supply water. Both were the result of a lot of hard work and both will help secure the future of the inland waterways that Dave is so passionate about.

MOVING FORWARD, MOVING ON

Dave's closing words in his final Annual Report & Accounts as chief executive show that he will not really be leaving the waterway world. In fact, if anything, we may see more of him. He ends the report with the words "I look forward with considerable enthusiasm to becoming, for many decades ahead, a user and volunteer of the waterways, and working in partnership with BW, which I am confident will go from strength to strength."

BW will go from strength to strength, but its loss is the IWA's gain: Dave was made a vice president in July.

As George Greener, BW Chairman, said at this year's Annual Meeting: "The man leading this team for the past six years needs no introduction. Dave Fletcher, who retires in December, is an inspirational, energetic and visionary leader. His contribution to the waterways renaissance over the past six years has been immense. Dave has transformed the inland waterways and helped us to lay solid plans for the future."

He certainly has, and it's a future we can all look forward to.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE **BRADLEY WORKSHOP** TEAM

The Bradley workshop in Bilston, West Midlands, is one of four workshops run by BW, along with those at Stanley Ferry, Bulbourne and Northwich. Between them they are accomplished in a wide range of skills. At Bradley there are 20 staff, including two young apprentices, four carpenters, four fitters, two welders and two self-employed people - a blacksmith and a painter. The staff keep themselves busy building and restoring boats and canal furniture including lock gates and bollards as well as repairing broken down boats. On a sunny day in August Zoë Hughes met the team at Bradley to find out what a typical day entails.

The team get straight into the day with their current projects. Terry Ray, the workshop manager, shows me around the yard. “No two days are really the same at Bradley - we have such a variety of skills here that we get very varied work throughout the year” explains Terry.

“We have two sections within the workshop. Our Plant & Craft Team look after all boat projects, from restoring neglected boats to building them from scratch, as well as dealing with call-outs from boats needing emergency repairs. The Heavy Timber Production & Service Team produce all the timber work, like lock gates, bollards and benches.”

Nicky Mullis, one of the apprentices, is busy prepping a boat ready to have a bit of cosmetic surgery. It is important to ensure that the traditional skills used at Bradley continue, and in order to do this they take on apprentices to learn the skills that have been in place for over 200 years.

“It’s not easy finding a course for our apprentices to go on, as the colleges do not use the machinery that we do” says Terry. “One of the courses we send them on is a car mechanic course. We then use what they’ve learnt there and teach them how to apply it and use the traditional machinery and skills in-house. With one of our oldest employees retiring soon after 21 years of service it’s also important to renew these skills by employing apprentices that can be trained up.”

Back to the boat the apprentice is working on, and John Edwards, Plant & Craft Team supervisor gives some information about its background. “The boat was built for BW back in the 1950s to be used as a work boat, which it was for many years. It will be a static display boat and will be on show at the BW Heritage Training centre in Hatton”.

John’s mobile phone rings – it’s a call from a boater whose engine has flooded, and water has got in the fuel tank. Paul Hill heads out to join him and hopefully repair the boat out on the canal.

“Not a day goes by when we don’t get a call from the canalside. Unfortunately one of the most common call-outs we get is for vandalised boats, especially during the school holidays, but we also get call-outs for things like boats that have sunk, water in fuel and mechanical and electrical damage,” says John. The workshop covers a large area for call-outs, which goes as far north as Norbury.

Meanwhile the Heavy Timber Team are busy producing some new lock gates, which are built from start to finish from unconditioned timber at Bradley. Geoff Jukes is adding the finishing touches to a pair of lock gates ready to go to

Llangynidr lock (No 68) on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal due to be replaced at the beginning of next year. They are just one of 50 pairs produced in the year at Bradley and go towards the 250 due to be replaced during the next 12 months.

As well as its day-to-day work Bradley Workshop also holds regular open days for the general public and for school children to come along and see the traditional skills in use. They've also been known to work with a few celebrities that have a keen interest in canals, such as singer Toyah Wilcox and actor David Suchet.

Next time you're out on the waterway and open a lock gate just remember the people at Bradley Workshop – it may well have been their hands that made it!

Bradley Workshop, Bradley Lane, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 8DW
Tel: 01902 491088
Heritage Training Centre, Hatton
Tel: 01926 626100

Main: A canal tradition still frequently seen, the Roses & Castles painting seen here at Bradley is by self-employed Ian Kemp.
l – r: Nicky Mullis, the apprentice working with supervisor John Edwards on their cosmetic surgery project; Nathan, one of the apprentices, practising his welding skills learnt at college; Finishing touches to the lock for the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal by workshop operative Geoff Jukes.

"Not a day goes by when we don't get a call from the canalside. We get call-outs for things like boats that have sunk, water in fuel and mechanical and electrical damage"

THEN AND NOW

GLASGOW

The history of Glasgow has always been inextricably linked to water. Originally a salmon-fishing village at a crossing point on the River Clyde, people have lived and traded at this spot for over 2,000 years.

Because of its westerly position, Glasgow was perfectly suited to send shipping off to the West Indies and America, and by the eighteenth century the city's merchants had amassed considerable wealth by importing sugar, rum and tobacco. These were the famous 'Tobacco Lords' who built some of Glasgow's most fabulous and opulent mansions.

Life was very different for the poor families of the tenements who crowded into the city in the hope of finding employment as the Industrial Revolution brought a new wave of expansion. The poorest families were forced to live in "single ends" – one roomed houses where the entire family, often including grandparents, would crowd together.

POWERHOUSE OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Despite the often harsh conditions, Glasgow became a powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution. Aided by technological advances designed by Clydeside inventors such as James Watt, heavy industry in the shape of railway locomotives and shipbuilding flourished.

'Clyde-Built' became synonymous with quality and reliability and ships manufactured on the Clyde carried this proud tradition to the four corners of the earth.

As an industrial and trading hub, the growing city of Glasgow was ravenous for supplies. A transport infrastructure to feed the city with a steady stream of fuel, raw materials and food was vital.

Back in the eighteenth century, before the days of steam trains and reliable roads, waterways were the 'superhighways' of the age and industrial Glasgow urgently needed to be easily connected to the sea.

Work started on the Forth & Clyde Canal in 1768. The plan was for the canal to leave the Forth by the Carron River to the first lock at Grange Burn, moving west through the valleys of the Bonny and Kelvin Rivers to Stockingfield (Maryhill).

However nine years into the project, lack of funds halted the construction of the canal at Hamilton Hill. It wasn't until eight years later, when money forfeited from the Jacobite Estates was made available, that building was able to continue. By 1790 the canal was completed to the Clyde and in the same year the Glasgow Branch was extended to the 'new village' of Port Dundas – named in honour of Lord Dundas, governor of the Canal Company.

The main canal was 35 miles long and was extended when the Monkland Canal was joined to Port Dundas Basin in 1793 and to the Union Canal at Camelon in 1822.

The Canal was bought by Caledonian Railway in 1867 (as a condition of buying the Port of Grangemouth). It remained under

railway management until 1948 when it was taken over by the British Transport Commission. The canal passed to the new British Waterways Board in 1962 and in 1963 Parliament closed all rights of navigation.

A once proud and vital waterway entered a period of deepening decline and depression. Glasgow's historic canal, so instrumental to the wealth and development of the city, became an impoverished, gloomy and sometimes threatening place where people feared to go.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

But the wheel of fortune has turned and the canal is again at the centre of exciting and life-changing developments in Glasgow.

Today, following BW's £84.5 million restoration, the re-opened Forth & Clyde Canal, together with the Union Canal (running to Edinburgh), forms the Millennium Link, re-instating coast to coast shipping across Lowland Scotland. The two historic canals are

Main: A frequent sight back in the 1960s, a cargo boat unloading barrels at Port Dundas
Clockwise l – r: 'The Armadillo Centre' in Glasgow; Port Dundas in the 1930s; Spiers Wharf back in the1950s; Nowadays Spiers Wharf is both home and work to many people

Photos courtesy of The Waterways Trust/BW Archive

linked at Falkirk by a breath-taking and futuristic rotating boat lift, The Falkirk Wheel.

In Glasgow the restored canal is playing an important role in urban regeneration, providing a popular recreational space at the heart of this revitalised city.

REDISCOVERING THE CANAL

Already there is concrete evidence of the social, educational and economic benefits the restoration has brought to Glasgow. House-builders are recognising the value of canalside properties and almost 200 new homes have been planned or built by water in one area of the city alone.

The restoration has been one of the catalysts for a spirit of increasing confidence and optimism in Glasgow and this in turn encourages inward investment and the creation of employment, and engenders urban pride.

The people of Glasgow are rediscovering their canal. Groups of children from the city's schools have been working together to collect rubbish from the waterway and to generally clear and maintain the canalside environment. In addition, two primary schools are adopting stretches of the canal, fostering a sense of ownership and care.

Following the success of a pilot scheme in Glasgow North last year, the 'Canal Employment & Training Project' is now underway. The project will run for two years providing opportunities for local unemployed people to learn new skills as they work on environmental and access improvements along the canal.

Glasgow is increasingly seen as an exciting and dynamic city attracting millions of visitors each year. 1990 saw the city acclaimed as the European City of Culture and in 1999 Glasgow hosted the Festival of Architecture and Design.

In fact The Falkirk Wheel, (already one of Scotland's top visitor attractions), is yet another example of the dynamic and forward-looking design for which the city is justly famous. This astonishing structure surely joins the amazing Glasgow Science Centre and quirky Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre 'Armadillo' on the banks of the Clyde as architectural wonders of the 21st Century.

And that's fitting for a city boasting pioneer architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh as one of its most famous sons.

The entrepreneurial spirit of innovation and audacity which saw Glasgow flourish from a small fishing village to a city of international renown is clearly alive and kicking.

Shortcuts

BITTEN BY THE BOATING BUGS?

Never work with children and animals they say, but Elaine Stanley does just that – and enjoys every moment.

As BW's Learning Services Officer for the London Region, Elaine comes into contact with thousands of the capital's primary school children and also some of the bugs and beasties living in the waterways.

"My role is to encourage London schools to use the waterways as a learning resource and that means actually getting people out beside the canals and rivers – not dry lessons in classrooms," Elaine explains.

Since taking on the new post just under a year ago, she has worked with children and teachers right across the capital.

One of the challenges she faces is the tight schedule of the national curriculum. "It can be difficult to persuade schools to allow time for waterways, but the Victorian heritage of the canals fits perfectly into the history syllabus and obviously waterways are a great teaching tool for environmental science," she explains.

Another challenge is making teachers aware of the proximity of some of London's most beautiful waterways to their schools. Elaine says: "Sometimes they don't know that there's a fantastic educational resource literally minutes away!"

Children are fascinated by how canals work and love helping boats through locks. Elaine quite often asks passing boaters if her party of 30 or so school children can help take their boat through.

"Everyone we've met has been very friendly – and only too pleased to take part in the lesson," she says.

Water safety is another important message and Elaine works to make sure that both teaching staff and pupils are aware of the potential hazards as well as the attractions of waterways.

A former primary school teacher, Elaine is a keen boater. "Being a boater certainly brings a fresh perspective to what I do. I think I'm very lucky to combine my skills and my passion in my work," she says.

If you would like to find out more about Elaine's lessons in London she can be contacted at BW's Little Venice office on 0207 286 6101.

WATER BABY

At just 21 years old, Amanda Strang has already worked for BW for just over five years.

She joined as a modern apprentice at head office in Watford in 1997, and now works at the Marsworth office on the Grand Union Canal as mooring administrator and administration assistant. The split role means that she gets out and about on the towpath as well as working behind a desk.

She explains: "As mooring administrator I cover the patch between Marsworth and Stowe Hill. My job is to make sure that there are no problems on the moorings and if there are, to solve them!"

Amanda works on a very busy and popular section of the waterway and she has lots of opportunities to use the skills and qualifications she has obtained while working for BW.

"When I joined I began studying for NVQs in business studies and customer

services and went on to do an HNC in business and marketing. I'm now in the last year of my degree in Business Studies at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College."

Not only does Amanda work in waterways – she also lives aboard her parents' boat at Slapton near Leighton Buzzard. And the watery connections don't end there as her hobby is scuba diving. Amanda explains: "I love it. I've dived mainly round the UK, but I'm saving up at the moment for a scuba diving holiday on the Red Sea."

Earlier this year she represented BW at a special Buckingham Palace garden party for people born since the last jubilee celebrations in 1977.

"It was a really interesting experience, but I have to admit that I didn't meet the Queen. I took the easy option instead and sat down with a lovely cup of tea to watch the crowds," she says.

Just for the record, cucumber sandwiches were NOT served, but Amanda says: "There were lots of other fillings on offer and ice cream too later in the afternoon."

WATERWAY ESCAPE

Before joining BW five months ago to work on the newly opened Ribble Link, Daniel Clough worked as a chef in a prison.

Now he has 'escaped' to take on the maintenance and care of Britain's newest navigation, having developed a taste for

life in the open air in a previous job as a tree surgeon.

Daniel explains: “I really enjoy working outside and being a tree surgeon was great. But I was laid off during the Foot & Mouth crisis early last year and that’s when I went ‘inside’. My work now as a waterway operative is much more enjoyable.”

Out in all weathers, Daniel’s role is to help maintain the Ribble Link. Having worked during the construction phase, he is now part of the team putting the finishing touches to the waterway including fencing and general landscaping.

When Daniel spoke to *Waterfront* at the beginning of September, more than 90 boats had already made the passage. He says: “It’s a challenge for boaters because of the tides. I wouldn’t say I’m an expert on tides and times yet but I’m getting there. It’s been quite a learning experience, as much for us as for boaters.”

Daniel says that reaction to the Ribble Link so far has been positive – especially to the prominent naked statue guarding the entrance to the Lancaster Canal from the waterway.

Daniel says: “It’s a bit different isn’t it? One thing’s for sure - no one misses it!”

WELSH ‘RABBIT’

As waterway supervisor for the beautiful Montgomery Canal, Steve O’Sullivan is learning an unusual new skill – he’s taking lessons in Welsh.

Steve explains: “Just over two thirds of the waterway is in Wales, but few people who work along it can speak Welsh, so I thought it was very important that I should learn.”

He admits it’s quite a challenge. “It’s a very difficult language to pick up,” he says. “But I’m finding it very rewarding. I did a 12-day intensive course, and now I’m doing evening classes. I know it’s going to be two to three years before I’m anywhere near fluent!”

A further incentive is the fact that his children are all learning to speak Welsh at school – one has even passed a GCSE in the language.

Steve is based at Burgedin at BW’s new Border Counties office, which was formally opened last November by Welsh Assembly Environment Minister, Sue Essex.

He is principally concerned with the operation and maintenance of the Montgomery Canal and its ongoing restoration. Steve represents BW on the Montgomery Canal Restoration

Partnership formed in 1998. Involving local authorities, volunteer groups, the Waterways Trust, BW and wildlife organisations, the partnership was formed to bring a joint approach to the restoration of the canal.

He says: “I know I might be biased, but I think the Montgomery Canal is absolutely stunning. I came here from working on the waterways in Manchester, right at the other end of the spectrum because they are so urban and bustling.” Steve enjoys the variety of his work.

“Although I try to plan ahead and try to stick to a schedule, there’s always something new around the corner. Also, I work with a great team and it’s very satisfying to be able to put something back into the environment.”

“Mae yn croeso I rhwyn I galw I’r camlas maldwyn” - “Everybody is welcome to the Montgomery Canal.”

FAMILIAR FACE?

Roger Hatchard, lock keeper and basin attendant at Diglis on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal says that one of the best things about his job is seeing so many familiar faces on the cut.

A former working boatman, he still sees friends and colleagues from the days when he worked out of Braunston, carrying loads including coal, wheat and cocoa for Willow Wren’s southern fleet. “It’s always interesting to catch up with people,” he says, “and good to see them out on the waterway still.”

Water seems to run in the veins of the Hatchard family. Roger’s own family have a seafaring past, his wife Jean comes from a family of working boaters and now his oldest son is working for Sealine International on some very swanky boats indeed.

Roger started working for BW in 1970, and has been keeping everything shipshape at Diglis Basin for nearly 28 years. “There are 120 boats here and I get real satisfaction from keeping everything in order,” he explains. Responsible for the basin and for a further six locks up the canal towards Worcester, Roger lives in an attractive former toll house beside the basin – so even when he closes his front door at the end of the day the waterway connections continue.

In fact he still has his own boat and this summer he and Jean spent 18 days cruising and catching up with family and friends. “A lot of my wife’s family still live by the water and it’s a good way to get around to see them,” he says.

This year the holiday took in the Ashby Canal, which Rogers says, “has changed beyond all recognition”.

WCRg INSIDE OUT

Take a look around when you are out on the waterways. You'll see boats, people, locks, swans, trees, bridges, warehouses, hedges, cottages and even shy, retiring water voles if you're lucky! Very different elements combine to create this idyllic waterside scene and maintaining the harmony of this distinctive landscape is quite a balancing act.

Waterway Conservation and Regeneration group (WCRg) is the department inside BW that helps local waterway offices care for and sustainably develop the built and natural environment. In fact, WCRg's expertise is so unique that it also advises a host of other organisations too!

When canals were primarily seen as a working network, few people really cared about the rich heritage and wildlife habitat they provided – but today the situation couldn't be more different. With waterways at the centre of some of the country's most exciting and ambitious regeneration schemes the work of WCRg has never been more important.

To find out how this change came about, cast your mind back to the days of flared trousers and glitter balls – the seventies. It might have been the era of space-age lava lamps – but it was also the time when people first started to think about heritage and the environment and how to protect them.

In the early seventies BW appointed Peter White as its first in-house architect. Based at Hillmorton, he covered the whole of the country and within a short time the organisation was appointing landscape architects, ecologists and environmentalists too.

Over time the need for specialists grew. More people with related skills were recruited and a variety of teams dedicated to the unique environmental and historic importance of the waterways developed.

In April 2002 WCRg was formed. For the first time the specialists who care for the built and natural environment that make up the inland waterways had been brought together in one department. Today there are around 65 people working out of Hillmorton (Rugby), Leeds and Gloucester.

Describing itself as "BW's in-house design, planning and conservation team," WCRg employs specialists in a range of disciplines associated with the design, management and restoration of inland waterways. The skills within the department mean that WCRg can provide a host of services including

"WCRg employs specialists in a range of disciplines associated with the design, management and restoration of inland waterways."

architecture, landscape design, planning, biodiversity and nature conservation, water quality management, contaminated land and dredging management and heritage skills training. Depending on the project, WCRg brings together teams of people from across the disciplines.

TIME FOR TEES

WCRg works as a consultancy within BW and plays a fundamental role in regeneration projects great and small. When BW's north east region and its partners planned to redevelop the River Tees, WCRg was approached from the outset to put together a strategy.

This involved looking closely at the river, its surrounding land, buildings and wildlife. Importantly the plan also had to take into account the needs of people living and working in the area. Prime considerations included heritage, biodiversity, navigation, leisure and operational issues.

The first part of the process was the compilation of a 'resources review' - an in-depth study into the waterway and surrounding area. Community consultation is important at this stage and river users, land owners and farmers were asked to contribute their ideas and hopes. Once all this information had been collected, the next stage of creating the 'Waterside Development Masterplan', really answered the question "how do you make all this happen?" with specific time frames, actions and responsibilities allotted to project partners.

On the Tees the review revealed some very specific problems, for example a massive shopping centre built with its back to the waterway. The challenge here was to create some interaction with the waterspace and embrace the river as an integral feature. Contrast this with a huge area over-run by invasive Giant Hogweed which will need at least five years to clear.

This is long-term planning and the 'masterplan' will take years to implement, but the care, detailed thinking and imagination underpinning the project will ultimately play a vital role in the regeneration of the whole area.

LYDNEY HARBOUR

WCRg is also working on a current project at Lydney Harbour for the Environment Agency. The team has won the contract in open competition to carry out a feasibility study to regenerate this site in the Forest of Dean.

The harbour was built in 1821 and trade continued there until the 1960s. Although an active sailing club is still based there today, strong tides and high sandbanks in the River Severn just outside the harbour make for treacherous boating conditions.

This is all set to change thanks to a £1.9million facelift, boosted by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £875,000. WCRg has proposed innovative ideas to transform the harbour including the use of wind generators and solar panels. The scheme for the regeneration of the harbour will include the development of a new marina and the restoration of the massive lock gates connecting the rivers Lyd and Severn.

ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA...

WCRg works on small local projects as well as large scale schemes affecting wide areas. On the Kennet & Avon Canal near Bathampton, BW's ecologists and engineers were caught on the horns of a dilemma when cattle needed to drink from the newly restored edge of the canal.

Because the bankside here had been fenced off preventing cattle from drinking, excellent habitat had developed – which was especially good news for endangered

water voles. Unfortunately it wasn't such good news for cattle in the adjacent field who were likely to become 'endangered' too if they didn't have access to drinking water. A solution had to be found.

One of BW's ecologists hit on the idea of using a solar panel to power a small pump to draw water up from the canal, under the fence and into a concrete cattle trough in the field. With no access to a power supply in the field, solar energy was the only way that the pump could be operated. The scheme now looks set to be used at other remote locations.

In fact wherever you travel on the waterways, you can be sure that you'll never be far from a WCRg scheme that's really making a difference.

Main: Cows enjoying their first solarised drink at Bathampton.
l – r: Peter Chowns, Chris Twomey & Richard Norwood looking at proposed plans for Lydney Harbour; Steve Fancourt working on the River Tees plan; Preliminary drawings for Lydney Docks.

WONDER FULL!

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, probably the most famous of the 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World' were described as having 'streams of water emerging from elevated sources flowing down sloping channels...' Does this sound a bit like Anderton Boat Lift or The Falkirk Wheel? Well, BW thinks so, and what's more it thinks there might be some modern day 'Wonders' right here on the waterways.

Think about it. Every mile of the inland waterways has something special to offer. Unusual structures, unique wildlife and quirky twists and turns can be found all over the country, and just like the 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World', some of them are quite exceptional. In fact some are so outstanding that BW has decided to create its own list – *The 21st Century Seven Wonders of the Inland Waterways*.

However, it must be said that BW was not the first to do this. Back in 1955 Robert Aickman listed a selection of his most memorable structures in his publication 'Story of Our Inland Waterways' and these became known as the 'Seven Wonders of the Waterways'. The list comprised Anderton Boat Lift, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Standedge Tunnel, Barton Swing Aqueduct, Bingley Five Rise, Burnley Embankment and Caen Hill Flight.

Now, nearly 50 years on, waterways have been repaired, restored and in some cases rebuilt. And in light of this renaissance, BW wondered if the list would still be the same if it was put to the public vote.

Teaming up with The Waterways Trust, BW went out to ask people what they thought should be on a modern day list. Would the newly restored Anderton Boat Lift rise to the top? Can Bingley Five Rise remain on the list now it has new competition? Does the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct still make people wonder? An extensive survey using leaflets, events and the internet was carried out and the result was unbelievably close!

Now *Waterfront* can reveal the results. The list has sadly lost Barton Swing Aqueduct and Burnley Embankment, but gained The Falkirk Wheel and Sapperton Tunnel. Although this list represents the top seven inland waterway wonders voted by the public, we must remember that there are so many more wonderful things to be seen everyday, everywhere on our special and unique inland waterway network.

CAEN HILL FLIGHT (1810)

The Caen Hill flight of 16 locks on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Devizes provides the final link in the 87-mile route of the Kennet & Avon Canal from Reading to Bath. It is part of a longer flight of 29 locks, climbing a very steep hill in Devizes. Engineer John Rennie's solution to this natural obstacle is very impressive. The locks became derelict shortly after the Second World War but, after years of dedicated restoration work along the entire length of the canal, were re-opened in 1990.

PONTCYSYLLTE AQUEDUCT (1805)

The highest and longest in Britain, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct is one of the most dramatic features on the inland waterways. Built by Thomas Telford and considered by many to be his masterpiece, the aqueduct is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a candidate for World

“Can Bingley Five Rise remain on the list now it has new competition?”

Heritage status, and a Grade I listed structure. The waterway in the sky carries the Llangollen Canal across the River Dee. It took 10 years to build and remains virtually unchanged since it was opened. More than 10,000 boats and 25,000 pedestrians cross it each year.

THE FALKIRK WHEEL (2002)

The world’s first rotating boat lift, The Falkirk Wheel is the centrepiece of the Millennium Link project to reconnect the Forth & Clyde and Union canals between Glasgow and Edinburgh and coast to coast across Scotland. Opened in May 2002 by HM the Queen, the magnificent Falkirk Wheel stands 115 feet high and is fast becoming a major visitor attraction. Its striking innovative design has already won praise from the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, who describe it as ‘contemporary sculpture’.

SAPPERTON TUNNEL (1786)

Possibly the most majestic tunnel on the inland waterways, Sapperton Tunnel on the Thames & Severn Canal was the first tunnel built wide enough to take broad beam barges. Much of the canal, including the tunnel, was abandoned in 1927, and gradually Sapperton Tunnel and the rest of the canal fell into dereliction. Sapperton Tunnel is now part of the restoration plans for the Cotswold Canals (comprising the Thames & Severn Canal and the Stroudwater Navigation) which would bring the full length of the longest broad beam tunnel in the country back to life.

ANDERTON BOAT LIFT (1875)

Dubbed affectionately ‘The Cathedral of the Canals’, Anderton Boat Lift was built to transport boats between the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey Canal 50ft above. Designed by Edwin Clark, it was the first such lift in the world to use hydraulic power to operate two counterbalanced caissons. Converted to electricity in 1908, its revolutionary system of hydraulics led to a number of replicas being built in Europe and North America. Closed for nearly 20 years, it was re-opened to the public in March 2002.

STANDEDGE TUNNEL (1811)

Standedge Tunnel, straddling the Pennines, is the longest, highest and deepest tunnel on the network and was completed in 1811 after taking 16 years to dig. Imagine being one of the 18th century canal workers having to slice through three miles of rock, all by candlelight! BW’s engineers used modern power and lighting to restore the tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which reopened in May 2001 after being closed for more than half a century.

BINGLEY FIVE RISE (1774)

When these impressive broad locks on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal first opened, thousands of people watched the spectacle of five laden boats as they made the steep descent. The five are a staircase flight, with the lower gates of one lock forming the upper gates of the next. More than 200 years later, these locks are still in daily use and many thousands of pleasure boaters pass through them each year. At the top of the locks is over 16 miles of lock-free cruising through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales.

If you haven’t yet seen these magnificent wonders, why not take a trip and visit one. For details of where they are, local public houses and other sites of interest, visit BW’s website www.britishwaterways.co.uk or contact BW’s Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120.

l – r: The Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal; The Falkirk Wheel joining together the Forth & Clyde and Union canals; Caen Hill Flight on the Kennet & Avon Canal; Sapperton Tunnel on the Thames & Severn Canal; Bingley Five Rise on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal; Pontcysyllte Aqueduct on the Llangollen Canal; and Anderton Boat Lift joining the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Letters

Dear Sir

I have just received my spring/summer issue of *Waterfront* and notice that it seems that canals equal barges. There are only two shots that include cabin cruisers that must have slipped into the picture when the photographer wasn't looking. Last week while I was visiting relatives in Birmingham I saw a programme on their TV called "Water World", which featured Gas Street Basin – again, if it floated it was a barge. Some months ago there was a programme on Radio Four with someone from BW. What did they talk about – Barges!

Could someone have a word with the higher echelons and tell them that a lot of the water craft are the small cabin cruisers, which are more likely to be bought by those of lesser means.

David Woolven
Newport, South Wales

Dear Sir

Having read the last issue of *Waterfront*, I could not resist writing some observations to you. First of all maybe the waterways should be called the English Waterways (EW). As the amount of involvement in this magazine for any other areas, except England is about 1%, which in real terms relates the unfair balance of investment.

I use the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, which we more often bottom than float, that's if you can get past overhanging trees. Wales has no canal in the class of the English canals, such as the Birmingham, Kennet & Avon Canal, the Droitwich Canal, etc. but, we are expected to pay the same fees for inferior facilities.

Maybe instead of investing many millions on already far superior canals, the money should be used to get other canals/rivers up to an equal standard, as the English area and boating fees dropped where standards are not good!

J.H. Phelps
Upper Cumbria, Wales

We write articles to reflect the wide variety of BW's work, whether it's in England, Scotland or Wales, whether it's about narrowboats, yachts, cruisers or barges or whether its about the many other projects BW is involved in. In fact, if you look back at the last two editions of Waterfront a cruiser (not a barge) was on one front cover and the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (in Wales) on the front cover of the other.

Nicky Ross, Editor, Waterfront

The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal is receiving its share in investment through the priority maintenance programme. For example, substantial engineering works are being carried out on three aqueducts and four bridges. New storm water discharge weirs have and are being built between Brecon and Llangynidr. Channel maintenance works will be undertaken this winter in the Gilwern, Govilon and Llanfoist area. A new culvert constructed at Mamhilad was completed during April to replace the original which was washed away during the winters exceptional wet weather. The opening of the new culvert and canal channel enabled craft to attend May's rally of boats at five lock Cwmbran over the bank holiday and the Queens Jubilee Celebrations at Pontymoile Basin. A major three year dredging programme is to commence this autumn, starting at Goytre Wharf and working downstream to Pontnewydd and including other sections of the canal from Llanellen to Brecon. A programme to remove overhanging trees and other foliage will continue having been delayed by nine months of inactivity through the effects of the foot and mouth experience last Summer. New customer welfare facilities were opened at Llangynidr this year. This is just a part of BW's commitment for this year and the future.

Richard Dommett, Waterway Manager, South Wales and Somerset, BW

Dear Editor

We have just read the latest edition of *Waterfront*, which not only gets better and better, but contains so many positive articles about our inland waterways. It is not just what has been spent this year on maintenance, the building of The Falkirk Wheel and the restoration of Anderton Boat Lift. It is also the vision of the future put forward by AINA and the proposals outlined in your article 'The End of the Beginning?'.

We were also interested to read in the letters pages comments about the helpfulness of private boat owners. We have found that helpfulness is not determined by the type of boat, or whether it is hired or owned, but by the occupants. This was where we hoped that organisations would bring together all types of boater as well as non-boater with an interest in the waterways. Unfortunately that appears to be a forlorn hope. The attitude also displays a misunderstanding that different people want different boats on different waterways for different purposes. What is suitable for a canal might not be at home on the tidal Thames and vica-versa.

Peter and Peggy Clark
Cheshunt, Hertfordshire

Thank you for your letter.

Please send letters to:
The editor, *Waterfront* Magazine, British Waterways,
Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD17 4QA
Email: waterfront@britishwaterways.co.uk

Dear Editor

Thank you for your interesting magazine. Thank you BW for taking the trouble to lay your hedges. I note that 'BW maintain a variety of hedge heights'. At the risk of stating the obvious, when the view is pleasant or interesting beyond the hedge, it is nice to be able to see it. When it is ugly and uninteresting is the place for a higher hedge.

Ron Bingham
Welling, Kent

Thank you for your letter.

Dear Sir

I enjoy reading your magazine, but find the optimistic note not entirely justified. The magazine's enthusiasm for biodiversity and the canals natural environment doesn't seem to have spread from Watford to this area yet as the enclosed observations set out. Trees here are regarded as a nuisance and the ultimate aim seems to be to reduce the canal environment to one of an easily maintained lawn towpath. This is no exaggeration, as in our two years cruising here hundreds of trees have either been mutilated or felled and with no replacements despite the canal supposing to be a linear conservation area.

I don't suppose that you can use our statement, by sending it to an influential figure at BW eases some of the anger and frustration.

Charles Forster
Holbrook, Derbyshire

We do have a varying approach to biodiversity management – as each of our waterway teams are developing biodiversity planning at their own pace. Our aim is to incorporate a biodiversity approach in all our work by 2005/06. In many areas there is potential to improve our tree and towpath vegetation management – to maximise biodiversity and recreational needs. To find out more about current local plans for biodiversity and how they will be developed in the next few years you should contact the local waterway office (contact details are on www.britishwaterways.co.uk)

Jonathan Briggs, Waterway Conservation & Regeneration group, BW

Dear Sir

Cruising the Trent & Mersey Canal on a rare, hot sunny Sunday afternoon, we waited at the mouth of Saltersford tunnel for a boat with a white light to emerge. We waited and waited, but nothing appeared and came to the conclusion that once again we had encountered a boat sporting a white stern light. By the time we reached Barton Tunnel we could see the culprit. A green narrowboat with cruiser stern, attached to which was a bright white light, which was promptly switched on as it entered the tunnel!!

J Munro
Warrington

We can sympathise with your frustration! In our new Boaters Handbook, we say "switch on your headlight, navigation lights and some interior lights", while what we should have said was "don't switch on the rear light - or keep it covered". When we re-print, we'll correct this. Thank you for writing!

Sally Ash, Marketing Manager, BW

Dear Madam

I read with interest the articles in the latest *Waterfront* about the Forth & Clyde Canal, and the AINA vision for 'The Missing Links'. I keep my broad boat on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, and have a full British Waterways Licence. If I wish to use waterways administered by other authorities I can obtain concessions with the fees.

We can reach the Forth & Clyde Canal, more easily than the Thames or the Severn, but when using British Waterways canals in Scotland we are charged the full Scottish fees. There can be few craft using both systems and a concession with the fees should not be too costly, whilst demonstrating the united nature of the waterways.

Gordon Sawyer
Leeds

We recognise this anomaly, and our current general review of licensing fees will recommend that holders of full annual licences for the connected network of waterways in England and Wales will also be valid in Scotland.

Sally Ash, Marketing Manager, BW

British Waterways

BRITISH WATERWAYS CALENDAR 2003

READER OFFER

Although it's only October, it's never too early to start thinking about Christmas stocking fillers - and the BW calendar is definitely a great gift choice for waterway lovers.

This year's new format includes wonderful, evocative scenes from all parts of the country, providing a year-round window on the waterways - from the magnificent Neptune's Staircase on the Caledonian Canal to a sparkling winter scene at Cheddleton on the Caldon Canal.

The calendar retails at £5 + £1.35 p&p per calendar. However, readers of ***Waterfront*** qualify for the discounted price of **£4 (+£1.35 p&p)** just quote ***Waterfront*** on ordering.

To order a copy of the BW 2003 calendar, contact the BW Customer Service Centre, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD17 4QA, Tel 01923 201120, Fax 01923 201300, Email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to 'British Waterways'.